

# Before You Know It, You Just Feel Better!

## *The Freedom to Walk*

There are few activities as sneaky as walking. You step out your door to take a stroll around the neighborhood or down to the local park. As you walk, a small group of joggers huffs and puffs their way past you, a speed walker rapidly approaches, with arms wildly flailing the air, and you wonder if you should be really exercising — not just walking. But you settle into that comfortable pace; the air is cool and fresh so you take big, deep breaths as you continue. On the way home, you detour slightly and check out the new people moving in around the block, only to realize you're going to miss the beginning of your favorite sitcom. You pick up the pace on the stretch home and get to the TV just in time — but now you don't want to sit still. Why? Well, you were warned about how sly walking is.

While you were out for a “stroll,” you were exercising — your heart beat a little faster, you brought more oxygen into your system, your mind took a break from your hectic schedule. Since you've made these “little” walks part of your routine, your stamina has built up — the detours to check out this or that have become more common. You also find a need to jot down all the ideas and obser-

ventions that became crystal clear during your walk — they seem almost like dreams that will pass quickly if not captured right now.

Other small, slow changes begin to appear physically — your weight starts to drop and you can't understand why. You quickly go up the stairs 2 at a time, then pause, thinking “I never used to do that.”

You will realize the tricky effects of walking when you go on a trip and find yourself leaving the car behind — because “it's easier to walk there than drive.” And to top it all, as you doze off you think of the beautiful things you saw during your walks and imagine new places. For some reason, this helps you relax and sleep better.

Walking, you see, unlike other forms of exercise, doesn't require special equipment; there are no gym fees, no locker rooms, no Mr. Universe type telling you “to push the envelope” or repeating “no pain, no gain.” With walking there is just you, a decent pair of shoes, and thousands of miles to pick from to go for a walk. Before you know it, you'll have reaped emotional, spiritual, and physical benefits from this simple activity.



*“We have the peculiar privilege ... the freedom to walk this earth, see its beauties, taste its sweetness, partake of its enduring strength.”*

*— Hal Borland*